



120 State Street - Montpelier, VT 05620-2501 - (802) 828-3135 - [www.education.vermont.gov](http://www.education.vermont.gov)

## **Three Vermont Schools Honored in Second Cohort of National Green Ribbon Schools**

**MONTPELIER** – Gov. Peter Shumlin, Vermont Education Secretary Armando Vilaseca, U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, along with the Chair of White House Council on Environmental Quality Nancy Sutley and Acting Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency Bob Persiachepe, today announced the second annual U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools honorees and inaugural District Sustainability Awardees nominated by the Vermont Agency of Education. **Reading Elementary School, St. Albans City Elementary School, and Shelburne Community School** are among the 64 schools nationally announced as 2013 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools (GRS).

The selected districts and schools are being honored for their exemplary efforts to reduce environmental impact and utility costs, promote better health, and ensure effective environmental education, including civics and green career pathways.

"These schools serve as a model for how small schools can do big things to improve the environment, use less fossil fuels, and engage students in achieving important environmental goals," Gov. Shumlin said.

"Students are a large part of the solution, they are full of creative ideas and energy," said Armando Vilaseca, Secretary of Education. "Our schools have been successful at collaborating and partnering within their communities and throughout Vermont in making their schools more environmentally friendly, and now they are being recognized nationally for the great work they are doing."

Reading Elementary School students presented at the Vermont State Science Teachers Conference and won the Governor's Award citing their commonsense solutions to eradicate poison ivy on the school's playscape -- using locally-owned goats to eat the plant. Staff and students at the Reading school partnered with Spring Brook Farm in Reading, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Parks in Woodstock and Shelburne Farms in Shelburne on the project.

"Our small community school in Reading makes huge efforts to lead by example," said Dr. Lou Lafasciano, Principal of Reading Elementary School. "This GRS award is yet another testament to all those hard-working students, staff, community members and local partners who are setting an example for the future through the rural sustainability model we are establishing today!"

Shelburne Community School provided numerous opportunities to observe a Green Ribbon School in action. The Staff Wellness Committee successfully promoted walking/biking/ hiking to school as a viable option both impacting health through fitness and lessening the impact of buses and cars.

Parents and students maintained flower and vegetable gardens - one for each grade level team. The school actively partnered with Shelburne Farms, Four Winds, New Village Farms, and their parent directed FEED program (table to farm school-wide composting program).

“A fundamental part of the mission of Shelburne Community School is to develop citizens who live responsibly and respectfully, and contribute positively to their community,” said Allan Miller, Co-Principal of Shelburne Community School.

“We are so proud of each of our students, staff, and volunteers because this Green Ribbon School recognition has grown from their persistent commitment to this mission and acting it out at the school on a daily basis,” said Pati Beaumont, Co-Principal of Shelburne Community School.

St. Albans City Elementary retooled their school, a building that was constructed in the 1960's. They insulated the windows with thermal shades, converted to energy efficient lighting, re-roofed (with added insulation) the entire building, and installed up-to-date electrical, heating and cooling systems that can be controlled by their Building Supervisor on his laptop. As a result, the environmental impact of the school is smaller and the building more comfortable to be in. Students have been an important part of the school's transformation. Students suggested a compost plan that led to a school-wide program that sends 100 percent of compostable food to a local organic farmer; students have been working with IBM engineers and the local Solid Waste District to 'invent' a method of compacting school milk cartons efficiently; and there is a school-wide Energy Committee, run by students that meets on a regular basis with experts from Energy Efficiency Vermont to review staff and student practices and behaviors.

“Our school, with the energy of our students and staff and the support of our community, has worked on becoming greener and healthier for nearly five years,” said Joan Cavallo, Principal of St. Albans City Elementary. “It will remain a focus for us. This award is a wonderful acknowledgement of the efforts of an entire school community.”

The list of Green Ribbon school selectees includes 54 public schools and 10 private schools. The public schools include seven charter, five magnet and four career and technical schools. The schools serve various grade levels, including 40 elementary, 23 middle and 19 high schools are among them, with several schools having various K-12 configurations, from 29 states and the District of Columbia. Over half of the 2013 honorees serve a student body more than 40 percent of which is eligible for free and reduced price lunch. The list of all selected schools and districts, as well as their nomination packages, can be found [here](#). A report with highlights on the 78 honorees can be found [here](#).

“Today's honorees are modeling a comprehensive approach to being green,” said Secretary Duncan in a release. “They are demonstrating ways schools can simultaneously cut costs; improve health, performance and equity; and provide an education geared toward the jobs of the future. In fact, the selected districts are saving millions of dollars as a result of their greening efforts. And the great thing is that the resources these honorees are using are available for free to all schools.”

Learn more about Vermont's GRS program here: <http://bit.ly/WZhnpb>.